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December 1995

Policyholder Basic Seminars Set

The first annual Workers' Compensation Basic Seminars are scheduled for the first of the year.

These half day seminars are designed to help policyholders learn more about workers' compensation fundamentals.

State Fund representatives will present information on how to reduce losses, lower medical and compensation costs, the new legislative reform, and independent contractor issues. There will also be an overview of basic audit principles, a presentation detailing the claim management process, and information on early reporting, managed care, and early return to work programs.

Policyholders will also have the opportunity to view the Richard Pimentel video, "The Taking Control Process."

Following the seminar, State Fund representatives will be available to meet one-on-one with policyholders to directly discuss questions or concerns. We hope that many policyholders will take advantage of this unique opportunity to meet one-on-one.

Seminar sites and dates:

January 11
Helena • Jorgenson's

January 15
Kalispell • Cavanaugh's

January 16
Missoula • Holiday Inn Parkside

January 22
Billings • Holiday Inn

January 23
Glendive • Holiday Lodge

January 30
Great Falls • Heritage Inn

January 31
Butte • Park (Copper King) Inn

February 1
Bozeman • MSU, SUB

If you have questions or would like more information about the Basic Seminars, please call Aidan at 5982.

May your home be filled with the warmth and spirit of this special holiday season.

Loss Control Building to be Best in the State

by Phil Rowe

We have just added three new loss control consultants to our staff, Annette Satterly, Tomas Maes, and Paul Carlson and are building our department to be the best in the State.

If potential safety problems are identified during a regular customer visit or if a customer request it we will be there to help. Our service will be targeted at improving policyholder understanding of their current exposures and help them identify possible control measures without OSHA involvement.

We will begin industrial hygiene services—noise level, toxic fume, and gas surveys—in the spring. Industrial hygiene service are offered only on a limited basis by the Department of Labor and private insurance carriers.

We are developing important expertise to help policyholders make their workplace safer while providing a competitive advantage for our organization.

Customer Commentary

Customer Service Rep. Cindy Gilbert was recently on the phone with a doctor's office in Bozeman and the woman from the office said, "Oh I forgot, you have real humans answering the phones, so I am never ready when you answer the phone so quickly." The woman went on to tell a co-worker, "the State Fund service is improving—they are getting a lot better."

A comment from a Claimant Questionnaire— *The amount of paperwork generated for this claim seemed to be far too much. It appeared that the left hand didn't have the slightest idea what the right hand was doing.*

The Trainer Knocks!

Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development

So many of you have successfully completed classes. There is no longer enough room to properly congratulate all of you in this space. But, Congratulations to you all!

Everyone has turned in their first efforts at developing Performance Commitments within the framework of the PPRP. Most of them were pretty good, in spite of what it may have looked like when you got the green pen comments back! They show a real effort to define what you expect to achieve over the rest of the rating year. Thanks to all for your cooperation and patience. Together, we'll create a better process for managing and recognizing our performance.

The next step is the "on-target" review. This is a short conference between you and your supervisor to go over progress to date. It should be formal enough to consider each performance commitment and review competency proficiency. But it should be informal enough to encourage a real exchange of views and information that should recognize strengths and review areas needing more development. Documentation should be limited to informal notes, made by your supervisor and shared with you, covering the substance of the discussions. The whole purpose is for us to know how well our supervisor thinks we are doing against our mutual expectations, and still have time to improve performance or shift emphasis to other areas before final review.

Supervisors, please remember that communication is an **exchange** of views. "On-target" reviews cannot be one-way or directive. The game is on and you are the coach. Listen, observe, and comment positively, but ensure your "player" gets a good opportunity to express to you how things look from the playing field as well.

I wish all of you and yours a very happy holiday season, and hope the new year brings good health, good cheer, and prosperity for your spirit as well as your purse.

See you in class! . . .

Frank

Training Opportunities

State Professional Development Center:
Humor in the Workplace - Dec 21
Managing Conflict - Jan 17
Writing Skills - Jan 18-19
Approaching Supervision - Jan 23
Project Planning - Feb 6
Quality Customer Service - Feb 7
Managing Change - Feb 13

Helena College of Technology:
(State contract computer training)
Intro to Windows - Jan 10 & Feb 13
Intermediate Windows - Jan 11
WordPerfect - Jan 16-17
WordPerfect Tables - Feb 7
WordPerfect Merge & Sort - Feb 8
WordPerfect Macros - Feb 12
Lotus Macros - Jan 23
Lotus - Feb 20-21
Intro to Oracle - Jan 24-26
Oracle Forms - Feb 5-9, 12-14 (am)
PowerBuilder - Feb 26-28

HCT night classes include:
Accounting I & II
SBAS
Intro to Micros
Lotus
DOS
Windows
WordPerfect and Advanced WordPerfect

If interested, get in to see me soon. Classes begin Jan 10.

The **Computer School** schedule will be in my office next week.

Human Resources

Personnel changes as of December 15.

Promotions/Transfers

Sherry Carroll, Claim
Bob Janicek, MIS
Dennis Small, Claim

New Hires

Debbie Hunter

Departures

Kathleen Androlewicz, MIS
Chuck Edquest, Claim

Kudos Kolumn

Kudos to Deanna Albert

—always helpful!

The Customer Service Unit would like to extend Kudos to Deanna Albert. Cindy Gilbert says Deanna answers lots of questions and is always very helpful.

Kudos to Mary Simpson

—appreciate your pleasant, prompt action!

A policyholder recently sent Mary a letter saying, "sure appreciated your pleasant, prompt action ...was wonderful to actually talk to people who really cared that they got the job done. So many times I've gotten 'no answer' or not much help when talking with city, county and state offices. Thanks again!!"

Kudos to Azmi Salaymeh

—a who's who!

Jean Ketchel thought it was "pretty neat" and wanted you all to know that Azmi was recently selected as an International Who's Who of Professionals.

Kudos to Linda Kirkeby

—presents an excellent image for the department!

A policyholder recently sent a letter to the Accounting Department praising Linda's service— "I am pleased to state that she promptly, courteously, and professionally provided all of the answers. She truly is a valued employee and presents an excellent image for the department."

Kudos to all who helped with the Christmas Party

—good food, good music, good fun!

Wes Winden did a great job as MC, Shawna Swanz made posters and tickets, and the Special Activities deserve special recognition for all of their hard work.

Kudos to Tor Gudmundsen

—working hard as Acting VP

The MIS Department would like to extend Kudos to Tor for all his great work as Acting VP.

Did you know..

Each Friday when State Fund employees pay a dollar to wear jeans or "go casual", the money raised goes toward two special causes. On alternate Friday's the money goes to the EFFY (Emergency Funds For You) and the Special Activities Group.

EFFY funds help fellow employees in times of crisis—travel expenses to see sick or injured family members or attend funerals are only a small sample of what the funds are for.

The Special Activities Group is a group of dedicated employees who plan the many fun State Fund employee events, such as the Christmas Party, summer picnic, etc. The group also sponsors a variety of fund-raising events year round like the book fair and caramel apple sale.

The Special Activities Group and EFFY members would like to thank everyone for their support and if you are interested in becoming involved with either or both groups or have ideas for fund raising events or know of someone in need of EFFY funds, please contact Wanda Person at 1654.

Ho, Ho, Ho Merry Christmas!

The Spirit of Christmas

submitted by Vonnie Johnson

I have a list of folks I know, all written in a book
and every year when Christmas comes, I go and take a look
And that is when I realize that these names are a part
Not of the book they're written in but of my very heart.
For each name stands for someone who has crossed my path sometime
And in that meeting they've become the rhythm in each rhyme
and while it sounds fantastic for me to make this claim,
I really feel that I'm composed of each remembered name.
And while you may not be aware of any "special link"
Just meeting you has changed my life a lot more than you think.
For once I've met somebody, the years cannot erase
The memory of a pleasant word or of a friendly face.
So never think my Christmas cards are just a mere routine
of names upon a Christmas list, forgotten in between
For when I send a Christmas card that is addressed to you
it's because you are on the list of folks whom I'm indebted to,
For I am but the total of the many folks I've met
And you happen to be one of those I prefer not to forget,
And whether I have known you for many years or few,
In some way you have had a part in shaping things I do;
And every year when Christmas comes, I realize anew,
The best gift life can offer is meeting folks like you!
And may the Spirit of Christmas that forever endures,
leave its richest blessings in the hearts of you and yours.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas at the State Fund

by Donna Liedle, Terry Loftsgaarden, and Donna Weber

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the Fund, the bills kept on coming, in by the ton. The stockings were hung from the Atrium with care, in hopes that Christmas bonuses soon would be there.

The adjusters were nestled all snug in their beds as visions of suspense reports danced in their heads. And Carl in his tux and the VP's in their threads had just made a toast to the New Year ahead.

When all of a sudden there rose lots of chatter. They barged from the Board Room to see what was the matter. And what to their wondering eyes did appear? It was Santa, and he'd tripped over one of his deer.

Is this where I file a claim he did ask? I'm in kind of a hurry, could we please make this fast? His claim was then processed and his check he held tight. He wiggled his nose and limped out of sight.

He then looked back and exclaimed in delight,
Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

Happy Holidays

by Rita Potts

Merry Christmas—Merry Christmas!!
The holiday is nearby.
Good old St. Sick will soon be here to fill your hearts' desire.
Gifts galore await you on Christmas morn.
May all you wish be granted on the frosty morn.
Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year to You and Yours.

Christmas Is

by Betty Hicks

Christmas is that time of year,
When people are filled with cheer.

Children's eyes light up with awe,
At the sight of Santa Claus.

Outside the snow is falling lightly,
lights on trees are twinkling brightly.

Christmas most of all is love.
Given to us by God above.

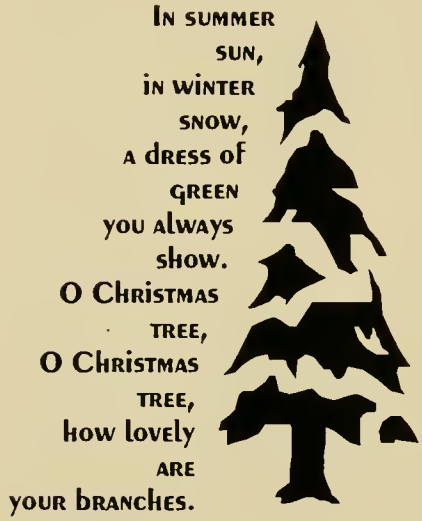
Message from the President

Last week, I received the recommendations from the Employee Focus Group and I want to express how much I appreciate the hard work that went into this report.

The focus group, made up of 10 employees from different departments did an outstanding job! They sorted through complex issues, identified fundamental concerns and created action steps based on feedback from you, the employee satisfaction survey, and the subsequent meeting we had where the key issues will identified. Communication and Decision Making were clearly priorities.

I am committed to working with the management team to support the recommendations in the report. I have scheduled a work meeting with the executive staff next week and I will ask for their feedback. Following the meeting, a report will be developed and available for all employees. In addition, January's Guardian will have an extensive report on the issues and recommendations.

Thank you to all employees for your feedback, ideas and time! Have a safe and wonderful holiday season!



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Letters to the Editor will be accepted from current State Fund employees and are to be submitted to the Editor no later than the last Monday of each month. The employee's name section and department, and phone number must accompany the letter. Letters deemed inappropriate to the goals and objectives of the *Guardian* or the State Fund will be returned to the author with an explanation of denial.

Letters to the Editor do not reflect the policy or official positions of either the Board of Directors or the management of the State Fund.

Editor, Aidan Myhre, Director, Industry and Consumer Affairs. **Managing Editor and Layout**, Shawna Swanz, Public Information Specialist. Call 444-5982 with comments or suggested articles for the *Guardian*.

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Banishing Burnout

Too much stress can weaken the immune system, raise blood pressure, and increase the risk of heart attack. But, worst of all, stress can spoil the simple pleasures of life itself. This is known as burnout. Here are a few simple strategies to banish burnout from your life.

Take five. Any break during a hectic day will help: a ten-minute walk at work, or five minutes of calm, deep breathing at your desk. Also, give yourself 15 minutes each morning and evening to quietly read the paper, sip a cup of tea, or soak in the bath and reflect on the day.

Take control. Surround your desk with photos, flowers, or mementos that make you smile. Take on more responsibility, which also means gaining more control.

Eat well. Don't work until you're ravenous, and don't settle for a quick fix of junk food, no matter how busy you are. Eating frequent small meals centered on fruits and vegetables will help you avoid fatigue.

Keep moving. There is no doubt about it exercise reduces stress and adds to our sense of control over our lives. In fact, aerobic exercise actually increases brainwave activity associated with contentment. So get out and have some fun!

Reprinted from the November/December 1995 issue of *HEALTH*.

A Thank You from John Wilkins

On December 9, 1993, my daughter Molly Wilkins was diagnosed with Luekemia. During the months that followed our friends here at the State Fund gave prayers and support in more ways than we could have ever imagined.

Many of you stop me from time to time and ask, "How is Molly doing?" Well, I'm way more than pleased to say she is doing GREAT!!! Molly is in complete remission and is expected to complete her treatments this February.

Two years have gone by and the trauma is now a bad memory, but so much of what you shared with us will be remembered always. It was your help that made this most difficult time in our lives much less painful. Thank you.

Employee of the Month

Congratulations to Dwight Bernard, Employee of the Month for November

Dwight was hired by the State Fund as a mail clerk over six years ago and a short time later became the mailroom supervisor.

With the new Imaging and Indexing system on-line, Dwight's staff has increased from 2 full-time to 7 full-time and 2 part-time people.

Even though the new system has added a much larger workload, Dwight's organization skills, creative ideas, and ability to communicate with co-workers has allowed the process to run smoothly.

Dwight constantly strives to please his customers and keep his staff on their toes. He is always accessible, working right beside them—never expecting more than he gives. Whenever a problem arises he takes action. If he doesn't know the answer, he will not give up until he does.

Dwight is always willing to give a helping hand and is there for his co-workers as a First-Responder in case of a medical emergency.